



## Introduction: On Transcultural Memory and Reception

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# Introduction: On Transcultural Memory and Reception

*Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Tea Sindbæk Andersen and Astrid Erll*

In the autumn of 2012, the sculpture *The Black Cone* by the Spanish artist Santiago di Sierra was placed in front of the Parliament of Iceland, on Reykjavik's symbolic square Austurvöllur. *The Black Cone* was intended to commemorate the massive public protests, the so-called 'pots and pans revolution' in Iceland 2008–2009 against the politicians held responsible for the country's financial crash. While the majority of Reykjavik's city council in 2012 agreed to accept the artist's donation of the monument, council members were divided on the issue and it did raise controversies.<sup>1</sup> Yet, since 2012 the monument has largely vanished from public attention.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps its shape – a natural rock with a ridge created by a small black cone – allows it to remain unnoticed or casually overlooked as one of several organic parts of the square. How are we to understand this lack of explicit reactions to di Sierra's monument? Is it rejection, purposeful ignoring, or simply indifference? At the very least we can say that as by 2016, no one has taken ownership or re-appropriated the monument as a memorial representation for her or his own purposes.<sup>3</sup>

When in 2012 Christopher Clark published the book *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914* as yet another attempt to analyze the causes of the outbreak of the First World War, reactions were numerous. Published strategically at the advent of the war's centenary by a renowned Cambridge historian, *The Sleepwalkers* was reviewed in newspapers and history journals across Europe, sometimes with acclaim and sometimes with lukewarm appreciation.<sup>4</sup> Clark's account was also included in several scholarly review articles that

1 'Sierra's "Black Cone" Causes Controversy in Reykjavik,' *Iceland Review Online*, 5 October 2012, accessed 8 October 2016. <http://icelandreview.com/news/2012/10/05/sierras-black-cone-causes-controversy-reykjavik>.

2 Gunnþórunn Guðmundsdóttir, 'Memory and Memorialisation in Post-Recession Iceland' (paper presented at the conference Collapse of Memory – Memory of Collapse: Remembering the Past, Re-Constructing the Future in Periods of Crisis, Lund, 20–22 September 2016).

3 Ibid.

4 See for example Ian Pindar, 'The Sleepwalkers by Christopher Clark – review,' *The Guardian*, 19 July 2013, accessed 8 August 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jul/19/>

traced the arguments proposed in the wave of new history books appearing in connection with the centenary of the First World War.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Clark made an effort to create attention around his book and held lectures in numerous German cities during the summer of 2014. Yet, for academic literature more unusually, Clark's book was also explicitly mentioned in a speech by Serbia's president Tomislav Nikolić two years after its publication, in the summer of 2014. Clark, according to Nikolić, was the primary source of a revisionism that aimed to convince the world that it was Serbs who had caused the Great War. Thus, argued Nikolić, 'the Serb struggle for freedom ... is now to be dragged through the mud'.<sup>6</sup> Though Clark himself had, already in 2013, clearly stated that he had 'of course not wished to blame Serbia for the outbreak of the war', this was clearly how he was interpreted by Nikolić and a number of historians and commentators in Serbia.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, unlike *The Black Cone*, which seems to have become a silent and unengaging medium of commemoration in spite of the importance of the events it recalls, Clark's book caused very explicit reactions, both in the historical debates of several European countries and in the political sphere and commemorative activities of Serbia in 2014. As these two examples show, the effects and afterlives of memorializations and reinterpretations of the past can vary to a great extent. Trying to understand how and why individuals and communities react towards mediations of memory is a complex challenge. In an article published in 2002, Wulf Kansteiner points out that memory studies have 'not yet paid enough attention to the problem of reception both in

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sleepwalkers-christopher-clark-review; Sean McMeekin, 'The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914,' *History Today*, 62, 12 December 2012, accessed 8 August 2016, <http://www.historytoday.com/blog/2012/11/sleepwalkers-how-europe-went-war-1914>.

5 See e.g. Hew Strachan, 'Review article: The origins of the First World War,' *International Affairs* 90, 2 (2014): 429–439; Andrew G. Bonnell, 'New Histories of the Origins of the First World War: What happened to the "Primacy of Domestic Politics"?' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 61, 1 (2015): 121–127; William Mulligan, 'The Trail Continues: New directions in the Study of the Origins of the First World War,' *English Historical Review* 129, no. 538 (2014): 639–666.

6 'Govor Predsednika Reublike, SANU – Veliki rat, 13.6.2014.' (Supplied at request from the press centre at the office of the President of the Republic of Serbia). See also 'Srbija ušla u Prvi svetski rat da bi opstala,' President of the Republic of Serbia, Press centre, 13 June 2014, accessed 8 August 2016, <http://www.predsednik.rs/lat/pres-centar/vesti/srbija-usla-u-prvi-svetski-rat-da-bi-opstala>.

7 'Srbi su 1914, bili sami – Evropljani,' *Deutsche Welle*, 11 November 2013, accessed 8 August 2016, <http://www.dw.com/sr/srbi-su-1914-bili-samo-evropljani/a-17215852>. See also the chapter by Dedovic and Sindbæk Andersen in this volume.

terms of methods and sources'.<sup>8</sup> Since then, the field of memory studies has developed in many important directions, but it is the contention of the editors and authors of this volume that we still struggle with the questions of how to understand and study the reception of memories.<sup>9</sup> The aim of this book is to move forward the scholarly discussion of these questions while paying special attention to the transcultural and transnational dimensions of memory transmission and reception across Europe.

As no mediation of memory can have an impact on memory culture if it is not 'received' – seen, heard, used, appropriated, made sense of, taken as an inspiration – by a group of people, reception is indeed one of the key issues within memory studies. Collective memory is an ongoing process of mediation; it is produced by the continuous internalization and externalization of memory contents and memory forms within social groups. Whatever narratives or images about the past are *externalized* (via 'media' as diverse as facial expressions, orality, performance, sculpture, texts, television or the internet), they can only become a meaningful part of collective memory once they are also *internalized*, i.e. received by audiences, readers, listeners, users or consumers.<sup>10</sup>

Reception is a central concern of the new transcultural memory studies. If we assume that all memory 'travels' (Erll), is constantly 'on the move' (Rigney), then it clearly must move *somewhere*, towards a (however transitory) destination. Successful memory transmission entails reception. Transcultural memory research deals with acts of reception which are located beyond commonly assumed boundaries (national, ethnic, linguistic, religious ones, for example). For transcultural memory to actually come into existence, deterritorialized transmission must be followed by localizing reception. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that key concepts of transcultural memory studies rely, more or less markedly, on the idea of memory reception: Levy and Sznajder's 'cosmopolitan memory' is an effect of (productive) appropriations of the

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8 Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in memory: A methodological critique of collective memory studies,' *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 180.

9 One indication of this is the fact that the otherwise timely collection *Research Methods for Memory Studies* (2013) does not feature a chapter on reception. A sustained discussion of reception from the angle of television studies is, however, provided by Ann Gray ('Televised remembering', in: Emily Keightley & Michael Pickering, eds. *Research Methods for Memory Studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP 2013, 79–96).

10 On the mediation of memory and mediated memories see Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, eds., *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2009); José van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Joanne Garde-Hansen, *Media and Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

globally circulating Holocaust-schema.<sup>11</sup> Michael Rothberg's 'multidirectional memory' is based on the reception and recombination of different memories.<sup>12</sup> Alison Landsberg's 'prosthetic memory' explicitly deals with memory reception and describes it graphically as the 'taking on' of a mediated 'memory limb'. Landsberg highlights the role of empathy as an important prerequisite of memory reception, and of solidarity as one of its potential effects.<sup>13</sup> Studies of transgenerational transmission, too, rely on the idea that younger people 'receive' memory messages transmitted by an older generation, however implicitly. Seen in this way, Marianne Hirsch's 'postmemory' is first of all an effect of memory reception.<sup>14</sup> But however fundamental the idea of reception may be to memory studies' current key concepts, the question of how to observe and analyse concrete acts of reception remains the major conundrum of the field.

How can memory studies address reception? One important caveat that has already been voiced by Kansteiner is that memory scholars should not conflate individual reception with receptions that are collectively relevant, i.e. that shape or change the collective memories of a group.<sup>15</sup> It would be a 'receptional fallacy' to study reactions and memory negotiations among individuals or aggregations of individuals (for example, a group of viewers' reactions to a film) and to draw from there conclusions about collective memories. It therefore seems important to distinguish between different dimensions and scales of reception: As Halbwachs has already emphasized, individual memories are always shaped by social contexts.<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey Olick therefore describes individual memories as "collected memories".<sup>17</sup> Collected memories are rooted in biological and psychic processes. They need to be differentiated from the dimension of "collective memory" in the narrower sense: the media, social practices and institutions that enable people to share memories, that often substantiate the

11 Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

12 Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

13 Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

14 Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

15 Kansteiner, *Finding meaning in memory*.

16 Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, edited by Gérard Namer (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994 [1925]).

17 Jeffrey K. Olick, 'Collective Memory. The Two Cultures,' *Sociological Theory* 17, 3 (1999): 333–348.

identity of a given group and that are anchored in the group's cultural life.<sup>18</sup> Only the ongoing interaction of both, individual and socio-medial dimensions of memory can generate what Maurice Halbwachs termed *la mémoire collective*. Furthermore, as De Cesari and Rigney (2014) have argued, there are different 'scales' of memory, such as the intimate, the familial, the local, the urban, the regional, the national, the transnational and the global. These are also the 'scales of reception'. Of course, each scholar who studies the reception of memory mediations will – depending on disciplinary background, methodological inventory and research questions – lay emphasis on specific dimensions and scales. However, as the dynamics of memory consists in the continuous movement of contents and forms between such levels, reception research will profit greatly from multi-level analyses.

Such complex research designs are of particular relevance for studies that aim to provide (mnemo)historical insights into how changes in cultural systems of representation take place. For example, a powerful mediation of memory by an individual can influence a large group of people, and in turn, when local groups repeatedly commemorate a specific event, they may change collective memory on a national or even transnational scale. Illustrations of such cases can be found in this book in the chapters written by Heimo and de Kerangat, respectively.

The crucial question is what we mean when we speak about reception in the context of memory studies. Since cultural memories are part of human communication we can try to answer this question by going back to communication theory. According to the original mathematical models of communication, 'reception' means the decoding of a message. Early models of media communication, such as that by Shannon and Weaver,<sup>19</sup> featured a sender, a message, a channel and a receiver (all aligned in the process from encoding to decoding). These ideas inspired linguists and literary scholars such as Roman Jakobson, who used it as a starting point to develop a sophisticated and complex model of 'communicative act'<sup>20</sup> which is shaping ideas about reception to this day. In this model there is no room for a simplistic conception of an unambiguous message encoded in, say, a history film, that is to be effortlessly decoded by its audience. Furthermore, in the wake of cultural studies, scholars

18 See also Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (London: Open University press, 2003), 25.

19 Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949).

20 Roman Jakobson, 'Closing Statements: Linguistics and Poetics,' *Style In Language* edited by Thomas A. Sebeok, (Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press 1960): 350–377.

such as Stuart Hall have emphasized that reception is an active process, which can produce diverse 'readings' or 'appropriations' of the same message.<sup>21</sup> The insights of cultural and media studies also reveal that it is impossible to isolate reception from other constitutive elements of the communicative act such as the message (memory representation, its content and form), the medium (the channel of transmission), the sender (agents/producers of memory) and the social contexts in which mediation and reception take place. All these elements of an act of communication are interlocked. Therefore, although on a theoretical level one can speak about reception as a specific element of the communicative act, in the empirical studies and on the methodological level it seems impossible (and arguably not desirable) to isolate it from the other components of memory communication. Moreover, in memory culture the cycle of production, representation and reception becomes a perpetual spiral. Reception is not the final destination of the memory process, but can lead to further (individual and collective) productions, such as private ones (for example, the retelling of family narratives between generations<sup>22</sup>), semi-public ones (for example, the sharing of photos on social media platforms) or official ones (the erection of a monument as a reaction to multiply mediated memories of a specific past event or figure).

A too strong distinction between representation and reception in memory studies is therefore misleading.<sup>23</sup> Many representations of memory emerge in response to earlier mediations of certain contents, and sometimes they may even be understood as explicit re-mediations. Thus, the analysis of a specific memory representation will often turn out to be simultaneously a study of the reception of an older memory by the producers of this new representation. An example of this can be found in this book in the chapter written by Majsova. She analyzes two films and examines them as acts of reception, because the filmmakers reinterpret, in these films, an already existing narrative dominant in their culture. Thus the filmmakers can be seen as both memory receivers (or 'consumers') of a specific memory narrative embedded in their culture, and as memory producers, since they reinterpret earlier narratives and remediate them.

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21 Stuart Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding,' in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128–138.

22 Harald Welzer, 'Re-Narrations: How Pasts Change in Conversational Remembering,' *Memory Studies* 3, 1 (2010): 5–17.

23 Cf. Kansteiner's 2002 criticism that memory studies privileges representation over reception (Kansteiner, *Finding meaning in memory*).

Remediations are acts of reception. The individuals involved in the processes of remediation are 'prosumers' (both producers and consumers).<sup>24</sup> This is especially evident in literature and the visual media, but also in the remediation of memories via so called new digital media. The chapter by Neijmann and Gudmundsdottir, as well as the chapter by Heimo in this book, deal with reception-as-remediation. In the words of Erll and Rigney, 'remediation is concerned with the ways in which the same story is recalled in new media at a later point in time and hence given a new lease of cultural life'.<sup>25</sup> Thus, studies of the reception of memories include studies of remediation and the circulation of memories. The remediation of a specific memory narrative can be studied as a form of reception on the individual level, but at the same time, if such remediations are recurrent, they are also evidence for the reverberation of this specific memory in the cultural sphere.

In light of the issues raised so far, it seems that there are two fundamental approaches to an understanding of 'reception' in memory studies: The first concerns the reception of mediated memory in the minds of individuals. The second refers to mediated reception: remediation. Of course, both dimensions (reception in mind and media) are interlinked. Mental reception is the starting point for remediation. It is thus possible to study (mental) reception via (medial) production. Conversely, for remediations to become collectively relevant memory receptions, they need to be actualized in individual minds. However, with units of analysis so far apart – mental operations in the first case, media representations in the second – methodologies will vary greatly: The study of representations, and filiations of representations, summed up under the umbrella term of 'remediation', has a long tradition in research on influence, intertextuality, and adaptation, in 'classical reception studies', and last but not least in Aby Warburg's work on the afterlives of symbols.<sup>26</sup> To access the reception of mediated memory in individual minds, memory studies can draw on social sciences' methodologies of qualitative interviewing, oral history and ethnographic approaches, on television studies' audience research and cultivation theory, or on literary studies' reception aesthetics and reader

24 Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins and Anna Reading, eds., *Save as ... digital memories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2009):129.

25 Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, 'Introduction: Cultural Memory and its Dynamics,' in *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 8.

26 Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Charles Martindale and Richard F. Thomas, eds., *Classics and the Uses of Reception* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006); Aby Warburg, *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, edited by Martin Warnke and Claudia Brink (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000).



response theory.<sup>27</sup> The social contexts of individual reception are studied by social psychology, which helps us to understand how a 'socially shared reality' is produced, for example by discursive remembering.<sup>28</sup>

Memory studies' insights into the dynamics of reception hinge on the involved disciplines bringing their methodologies to the field. To give just a few examples: Where memory research has teamed-up with social network analysis, it has enabled us to look at transnational networks of commemoration and to conduct 'influence mapping'.<sup>29</sup> Studies located at the intersection of museum studies and memory studies have developed complex approaches to the 'mediation of memory', which pay attention to the visitors' experience of and engagement with the museum.<sup>30</sup> Visitor studies increasingly work with 'eye tracking' methods to follow museum goers' individual attention to texts, images and objects.<sup>31</sup> From literary and media studies perspectives, the reception of films such as *Hotel Rwanda* or *The Downfall* has been shown to be deeply influenced by individual viewers' backgrounds.<sup>32</sup> On a collective level, the status and meaning of a 'memory film' seems to be negotiated 'outside' the film's symbolic structure, within 'plurimedial constellations'.<sup>33</sup> The narratology of

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- 27 Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998); James Shanahan and Michael Morgan, *Television and Its Viewers: Cultivation Research and Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978); Stanley E. Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980).
  - 28 Charles B. Stone and Lucas M. Bietti, eds., *Contextualizing Human Memory: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding How Individuals and Groups Remember the Past* (London: Routledge, 2016).
  - 29 Jenny Wüstenberg, 'Vernetztes Gedenken? Netzwerkmethoden und Transnationale Erinnerungsforschung' *Jahrbuch für Politik und Geschichte* 6 (2016): 97–113.
  - 30 Silke Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Irit Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
  - 31 Silvia Filippini Fantoni, Kyle Jaebker, Daniela Bauer and Kathryn Stofer, 'Capturing Visitors' Gazes: Three Eye Tracking Studies in Museums.' In *Museums and the Web 2013*, edited by N. Proctor & R. Cherry (Silver Spring, MD: Museums and the Web. Published 31 January 2013), accessed 16 December 2016, <http://mw2013.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/capturing-visitors-gazes-three-eye-tracking-studies-in-museums/>.
  - 32 Christian Gudehus, Stewart Anderson and David Keller, 'Understanding Hotel Rwanda: a Reception Study,' *Memory Studies* 3, 4 (2010): 344–363.
  - 33 Astrid Erll and Stephanie Wodjanka, eds., *Film und kulturelle Erinnerung: Plurimediale Konstellationen* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2008).

cultural memory has shown that narratives about the past often display a 'rhetoric of collective memory' with a specific 'mnemonic potential' that may be actualized by (and thus have actual effect on) individual readers and viewers.<sup>34</sup>

Receptions are never stable, once-and-for-all understandings of collective memory. They will be shaped and reshaped *across time* by frameworks of discursive and otherwise mediated remembering, for example, by discussions among family and friends, by social media, and newsmidia. But are repeated, particular representations of the past in the public arena and their assimilation into dominant discourses a sufficient indicator for their impact on collective memory in a society? The case analyzed in the chapter written by Kapralski in this book speaks against such a claim. Kapralski argues that despite a large amount of new memory narratives about Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust which have been repeatedly remediated in Polish culture during the last fifteen years or so, the Polish collective memory of the Holocaust has not changed tangibly, at least as evidenced by opinion polls. This case points to a difficult question about the relation between knowledge and memory. We may make a distinction between knowledge about and memory of something. 'To know something' is not the same as to internalize something to the point that it is important to one's identity, attitudes and behaviour. This distinction makes studies of reception particularly difficult and emphasizes the need to study also emotional aspects of reception, an attempt of which is made in the chapter by Pavlakovic and Perak in this volume.

How can we address this complex process of meaning-making involved in reception? How are we to answer the question put at the beginning of this introduction describing the cases of *The Black Cone* and *The Sleepwalkers*, i.e., why do some mediated (and remediated) memories take root in collective memory while others fail?

In order to come closer to responding to these issues, Kansteiner suggests that we pay particular attention to three factors: '... the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame all our representations of the past, the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions, and the memory consumers who use, ignore, or transform such artefacts according to their own interest'.<sup>35</sup> This analytical model can serve as a good starting point for the analysis of reception, but it has to be substantially developed in order to catch the complexity of the reception processes. First and foremost, representation as

34 Astrid Erll, 'Literature, Film and the Mediality of Cultural Memory,' in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, edited by Astrid Erll & Ansgar Nünning, 389–398. (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2010).

35 Kansteiner, *Finding meaning in memory*, 180.

such disappears in this model and should be re-introduced into it. The content of the mediated story about the past, as well as its forms (including genre, plot structure, and narrative voice) and the medium used, play a role in the process of reception. An inquiry into why some stories succeed and others do not would have to consider 'the medial framework of remembering and the specifically medial process through which memories come into the public arena and become collective'.<sup>36</sup> Media have their different kinds of logic and both media producers and consumers exploit the possibilities and are restricted by the limitations of their chosen media. For example, it matters for the reception of a certain story about the past if the medium used is seen as reliable (such as scholarly historiography), stands for immediacy of experience (such as live news) or if the mediated text or image is seen as authentic (such as seemingly 'indexical' press photography and documentary film).

Furthermore, when analysing reception it is important to pay attention to the importance of what Erll calls 'premediation' – cognitive schemata and patterns of representation that are available in a given media culture. They are 'patterns and structures of knowledge on the basis of which we make assumptions regarding specific objects, people, situations and the relation between them'.<sup>37</sup> By reducing the complexity of reality, they influence our perception of what we remember. We acquire cognitive schemata through socialization in the cultural environments we are raised in and where we encounter repertoires of medial representations of the past.<sup>38</sup> These culturally inherited and mediated schemata and templates influence the memory producers and the representations of the past they create. They also influence memory consumers (or rather prosumers), whose reception is shaped by their own cultural schemata.<sup>39</sup> Sindbæk Andersen and Dedovic's chapter in this volume investigates how strongly premediation may shape political responses to representations of the

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36 Erll and Rigney, 'Introduction', 2.

37 Astrid Erll 'From "District Six" to *District 9* and Back: The Plurimedial Production of Travelling Schemata,' in *Transnational Memory. Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, edited by Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney, (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2014), 31. See also James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

38 On the culture-specificity of narrative schemata, see the seminal study by F.C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

39 Ignacio Brescó de Luna and Alberto Rosa Rivero, 'Memory, History and Narrative: Shifts of Meaning when (Re)constructing the Past,' *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 8, 2 (May 2012): 300–310.

past. And Farbøl shows how the mediation of memories of one significant past may premeditate the memorial framework of an altogether different past.

The cultural templates and schemata, many of them embodied, some even unconscious and often not explicitly articulated,<sup>40</sup> create cultural constraints for memory production and reception and shape cultural frames of memory dynamics. This cultural 'programming' may help us understand why some memories evoke strong emotions and others not. As pointed out by Sara Ahmed, what is 'sticky' in terms of emotions and affect differs to a large extent from one culture to another.<sup>41</sup> It may be justified to assume that memory representations that reverberate with specific cognitive schemata and affective patterns of reaction embedded in the culture of receivers/consumers, may have greater chance to take effect in their cultural memory. Consequently one may claim that 'the intellectual traditions', mentioned by Kansteiner are important but not enough to consider in the studies of reception. Cultural frames for memory reception include many more elements that have to be accounted for and they matter as much to memory makers as to memory consumers.

In his model Kansteiner rightly mentions the necessity to scrutinize the interests and needs of the main players in the memory field: memory makers and consumers. Such a functionalist perspective is necessary to understand the importance attached to certain memories. For what purposes are memories used? What kind of needs, and whose needs, can be met by the mediation of certain stories and interpretations of the past? Furthermore, it is vital for the study of reception to properly identify who the memory agents actually are. It makes a difference whether they possess cultural capital in terms of authority and trust in the eyes of the memory 'prosumers'. It makes a difference, too, whether the memory agents manage to identify the needs and interests of their audience and shape their narratives accordingly.

Last but not least the entire social context in which reception of the mediated narratives of the past takes place has to be considered, with special attention to power relations. Do the agents of memory and 'prosumers' have access to structural resources (such as institutions), the financial means, and power enough to direct public attention to particular memory narratives and establish them as part of the cultural canon? These kinds of questions have to be approached, because the world of memory is a world of political economy. Political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and to some extent historians

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40 For more about the embodied memories see for example Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

41 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2004).

are usually interested and methodologically well equipped to study these aspects. In this volume the reader will find many examples of studies focusing on such issues, especially in the chapters by Góra and Mach, Jones, Kapralski, Melchior and Farbøl.

It is the contention of the editors and authors of this book that in the studies of reception we should ideally pay attention to all elements involved in the process of memory as a communicative act and the interplay between them, avoiding an exclusive focus on memory consumers as a distinct unit. Moreover, reception in itself is a dynamic, ongoing process, one difficult to capture. A number of researchers within communication studies struggle with this problem when they want to investigate the impact of certain products (such as films, books etc.) on the audience. It may feel like chasing a moving target. A researcher can take a snap-shot of reception at a certain moment. By doing questionnaires and interviewing people before and after the act of consumption of the memorial story (viewing or reading) they can draw some conclusions about reception.<sup>42</sup> However, this method catches the reception at a certain moment of time, gives a snap-shot of audience reactions, but these can change rather quickly in a changed social constellation and in a new context. Thus, long-term effects of memory mediation remain a difficult question. But memory scholars are particularly interested in this aspect: What 'stays'? What becomes absorbed in people's imagination?

To approach the last questions we need longitudinal studies, a diachronic perspective and a historical approach to the material. There are many cases of mediated stories about the past that fail to attract public attention at a certain moment but, remediated at a later point in time in a new social and medial context, they become highly visible in the public arena and sometimes even part of official memory.<sup>43</sup> The last process requires, however, repetitions of the story over a longer time span and reiterations across different cultural and social platforms in the public arena, such as commemorative speeches

42 See for example the study by Jürgen Grimm, 'How do films contribute to shaping teenagers' identity' (Paper presented at the conference Mapping Memories, Kijev 2 October 2016). See also link [http://www.br-online.de/jugend/izi/english/publication/television/29\\_2016\\_E/Grimm-How\\_do\\_films\\_contribute\\_to\\_shaping\\_teenagers\\_identity.pdf](http://www.br-online.de/jugend/izi/english/publication/television/29_2016_E/Grimm-How_do_films_contribute_to_shaping_teenagers_identity.pdf) (accessed 20 October 2016).

43 See, for example Kansteiner on the reception of the TV-miniseries *Holocaust* (1978) in Germany: Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics After Auschwitz* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006) or Bijl on the (re)emergence of photographs of colonial atrocity in the Netherlands: Paul Bijl, *Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015).

and rituals, books (including school books), images and the Internet. In this way the memory narrative can be anchored in the imagination of a community and tied to its identity. It can become part of the 'canon', or at least of the 'archive', to use Aleida Assmann's distinction. The first 'stands for the active working memory of a society that defines and supports the cultural identity of a group'.<sup>44</sup> The second is the passive realm of cultural memory, a kind of 'store house' of the mnemonic representations that can be taken into use when there is need for them. The ongoing movements between the two, the 'mutual influx and reshuffling',<sup>45</sup> contribute to the dynamics of memory and can make it difficult to judge as to what is 'failure' and 'success' in the process of reception of a certain memory narrative. Can we speak about a 'successful' reception of a memory if it takes root in the culture of a community and becomes a part of 'the archive', or is 'success' equal to becoming a part of a 'canon'? However, even if a memory succeeds in establishing itself as part of the 'canon' this does not necessarily mean that it is supported by a widespread consensus within the community. Despite common knowledge of a certain mnemonic narrative and despite its dominance in the public arena, individuals, even *en masse*, can refuse to internalize it emotionally, receiving it as a knowledge *about* but not a memory *of* a particular version of the past. As mentioned earlier, the cognitive knowledge of the past does not need to be followed by its emotional or identity-related perception. This discrepancy is especially common in the processes of reception of the so-called 'difficult', traumatic past. The chapter by Kapralski in this book illustrates this dilemma. He summarizes it in the statement that the Holocaust can be commemorated but not remembered.<sup>46</sup> Is this evidence of failed reception? Farbøl demonstrates in her chapter how a certain past, that of the Cold War, can be represented in museums with numerous visitors, but apparently without a surrounding memory culture and without much reaction from the audience. Another contributor to this volume, de Kerangat, complicates further our view on reception by pointing to the fact that we should be careful to interpret silence around a certain memory as a sign of indifference and thus 'a failure' in the process of memory reception. She demonstrates with the case of post-Franco Spain that silence can be a form of reception.

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44 Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive,' in *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Angar Nunning (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2008), 106.

45 Ibid.

46 An example of previous research that paid attention to this problem is the seminal study 'Opa war kein Nazi': *Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* by Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschugnall (Frankfurt/M.: S. Fischer, 2008).

In sum, this volume shows that the processes of memory reception are extremely complex and dynamic. Studying them may involve tracing chains of reactions, mediations and re-mediations, circulations and re-circulations, re-appropriations and rejections. It includes investigating already existing memory patterns, understanding the specific dynamics of genres and fields of discourse, and trying to grasp political needs and the cultural logic of the present. Studies of reception in all these aspects require a variety of methods. Through a selection of chapters that analyze cases of transcultural transmission and reception of European memories of the twentieth century, we hope to demonstrate both the variety of questions about reception that exists, understood as entangled in all parts of the mnemonic communicative act, and the diversity of ways in which to investigate them.

The authors of the chapters in this volume apply a variety of methods in their analyses of reception. These are, among others, interviews, participant observation, opinion polls, surveys and questionnaires, close reading of specific images, films and other media text, netnography, discourse analysis of speeches and debates, as well social network analyses. Moreover, they contribute to a deeper understanding of reception from the perspective of their respective disciplines: anthropology and ethnology, cultural studies, history, sociology, literary studies, cognitive linguistics and political science.

The examples of *The Black Cone* and *The Sleepwalkers*, mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, point to the fact that Europe's twentieth century memories are inherently transcultural and, with the rise of digital communication and the radically intensified mobility of people across the national borders, increasingly so. Memory representations in Europe and in the world travel across borders: cultural, national, and linguistic ones, but also between media and genres, as well as domains of society, such as politics, popular culture, history, the arts, mass media and education. The Internet and modern mass culture have made the distribution and sharing of memory content faster and easier.<sup>47</sup> This also allows people to engage emotionally with memories that they are not obviously connected with through personal, familial, ethnical or national ties.<sup>48</sup> People can become part of new memory communities, subcultural, cosmopolitan or activist groups, and to (differently) imagined memory

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47 Andrew Hoskins, 'Digital Network Memory,' in *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamic of Cultural Memory*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 91–106.

48 Stef Craps and Michael Rothberg, 'Introduction: Transcultural Negotiations of Holocaust Memory,' *Criticism* 53, 4 (2011): 517.

communities, such as European communities or global ones.<sup>49</sup> Due to the multifaceted nature of our identities our individual memory is located at the intersection of multiple social frameworks and thus it is inherently transcultural. The same can be argued about cultural memories since no culture is a closed container and the entanglement of cultures and their interaction is taken for granted in today's society. Moreover, cultures are always internally heterogeneous, to a larger or lesser extent.<sup>50</sup>

These basic insights, however, have not been at the centre of attention of memory studies as they (re-)emerged in the 1980s, when 'cultural' or 'collective memory' was usually imagined as the mnemonic property of bounded cultures – the memory of a nation, an ethnic group, a religious community, a social class etc. In the age of Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*, 'methodological nationalism' (U. Beck) was only the most visible aspect of the larger tendency towards 'methodological culturalism'. This tendency to see cultures as containers affected a reification of the bonds between culture and memory. However, some researchers, including Erll, Rigney and Rothberg have recently pointed to the need to direct attention to the inherent transculturality of memory. This volume contributes to this new direction in memory studies by scrutinizing one specific arena of transcultural memory practice – Europe – and by focusing on reception as a major force of the transcultural memory process.

By focusing on the transculturality of memory, the editors and authors of this book take into account that memory cultures, like cultures in general, are no homogenous unified entities but rather 'more porous than previously acknowledged'.<sup>51</sup> Memory communities increasingly cross traditional (or traditionally perceived) cultural borders and are, like most modern cultural communities, characterized by internal differentiation and external interconnectedness.<sup>52</sup> The concept of transculturality encompasses – and cuts transversally across – the international, the national and the local, the universalistic and the particularistic. As suggested by Astrid Erll, the term 'transcultural' can

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49 For discussion about possibilities of global communities of memory see Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad, eds., *Memory in a Global Age. Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).

50 See Wolfgang Welsch: 'Transculturality – the puzzling form of Cultures Today,' in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, edited by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 194–213.

51 Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, 'Introduction,' in *The Transcultural Turn. Interrogating Memory between and beyond borders*, edited by Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 19.

52 Wolfgang Welsch, 'Transculturality – the puzzling form of cultures today'.



be used as 'an umbrella term for what in other academic contexts might be described with concepts of the transnational, diasporic, hybrid, syncretistic, postcolonial, translocal, creolized, global or cosmopolitan'.<sup>53</sup> As the prefix of 'trans' indicates, we are looking at movements from one or more of the porous European memory communities to others, and, by focusing on reception, we are exploring the dialogues between them. What happens when memories are shared across alleged cultural borders? How are they negotiated, transformed, appropriated or rejected?

Transcultural memory according to Erll can be conceived 'as the incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms and practices of memory, their continual "travels" and ongoing transformations through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders'.<sup>54</sup> The chapters of this book show the 'travelling' of memory and what happens in this process. Jones, Melchior, Góra and Mach demonstrate in their chapters how individuals such as migrants, politicians and activists of different organizations try to disseminate, outside their countries, the mnemonic narratives ('contents') of their national communities, seeking recognition for them among people of other nationalities in Europe. Jones points especially to how forms and practices of remembrance are shared among people from the organizations that work with politics of memory. She indicates directions of diffusion and mutual influence. The 'travelling' practices are also in the focus of the chapter by de Kerangat, who points to a transnational reception of the discourses promoting and implementing silence about the violent past. She also emphasizes the transcultural and transnational character of the practice of exhumation of the victims of mass violence as a way of remembering. Farbøl shows how memories of a past shared by an international community is translated into a decidedly quiet national narrative, whereas Sindbæk Andersen and Dedovic demonstrate how national memory politics may take the shape of a reaction to or even rejection of tendencies within international history debates. Other authors put greater focus on the travel of the specific memory contents and media across space, time and cultures (Neijmann and Gudmundsdottir, Heimo, Majsova, Kapralski, Pavlakovic and Perak). Pavlakovic and Perak also direct our attention to the important, but much less researched, intersubjective aspect of memory transmission and reception.

The chapters of the book are divided into two general sections. While all chapters study transcultural transmission and reception of memory, the chapters in the first section concentrate on the roles of memory actors and

53 Astrid Erll, 'Travelling Memory' *Parallax* 17, 4 (2011): 9.

54 Ibid.11.

entrepreneurs, as well as different social and political practices in transcultural transmission and reception of memory.

The role of memory entrepreneurs and institutions in transnational sharing of memory narratives and in the processes of transmission, reception and redistribution is explored in the first chapter by Sara Jones. Using social network analysis to investigate networks of memory entrepreneurs, Jones charts the involvement of institutions, and the connections through which narratives of memory and ways of remembering are transmitted and shared within such networks. Turning our focus towards the role of memory agents, Jones introduces the concept of 'collaborative memory' in order to emphasize how networks of institutions and entrepreneurs work together across borders when constructing narratives of memory, and to explore how such narratives are received and put to use in different places.

Political mediation and use of memory in a European political arena, as well as political reception of memory politicization is the topic of the chapter by Zdzisław Mach and Magdalena Góra, who explore how Polish politicians in the European Parliament have demanded recognition for Polish, and more generally Central European, memories of the twentieth century. Analyzing debates from the European Parliament since 2004, Mach and Góra show how the Polish concerns, though partly based on domestic memory debates and divisions within Polish politics, were received largely favourably on a principal level, and requests to recognize memories of totalitarian communism were widely supported by Parliamentarians. Yet, as the chapter shows, attempts to use these memories in requests for economic concessions have been less successful.

Political agency in the form of reception and contestation of a particular interpretation of the past is studied in the third chapter by Tea Sindbæk Andersen and Ismar Dedovic. Looking at the Serbian president's reception of a historical study that reinterprets the much-discussed question of the causes of and path to the outbreak of the First World War, Sindbæk Andersen and Dedovic argues that this kind of reception reflects both a need to defend an essential part of Serbian national memory and a significant and somehow politically obliging premediation in the form of a tradition to reject Serbian responsibility for the outbreak of the Great War.

Zoé de Kerangat's chapter on exhumations of victims of Francoism by their friends and relatives investigates an example of contestation and rejection of memory politics from the side of unofficial and very local memory agents. De Kerangat shows how small memory communities have reacted to official memory politics through informal practices of contestation. Indeed, the exhumations constitute both a belated reaction to and commemoration of the crimes and a form of reception – and rejection – of official memory politics

after the fall of the Franco regime. De Kerangat demonstrates how very local and unofficial memory entrepreneurs defy the memory politics of the state by quietly creating alternative sites and rituals of memory, thereby affirming alternative memory narratives.

The individual as memory agent, both with regard to remediation and reception, is the topic of Inge Melchior's chapter on Estonian migrants in the Netherlands. Through interviews and participant observation, Melchior explores how Estonians perceive themselves as carriers of national memory narratives that are not quite compatible with the mainstream memory framework in their new country of residence. Melchior shows how individuals feel both challenged and obliged to defend their position, but also that attitudes from both Estonians and long-time citizens of the Netherlands are dynamic and influenced by, for example, changing attitudes towards Russia in the Netherlands

The chapters in the second section focus on the functions of contents and media in the processes of transcultural transmission and reception of memory.

The way that politically contested memory is being mediated in a way that somehow minimizes contestation is studied in the section's first chapter, in which Rosanna Farbøl explores how the disputed memory of the Cold War in Denmark is being presented at several new or newly refurbished Cold War museums. Farbøl emphasizes how the museum mediation is largely framed as a re-appropriation of the internationally established Second World War memory framework, though with a strong element of the counterfactual, which allows for a degree of playfulness. Whereas the Cold War museums can certainly be understood as a reception and remediation of a Danish political Cold War discourse, Farbøl points out a surprising absence of reactions to the museums, in spite of their potentially controversial context.

Slawomir Kapralski's study of Holocaust memory in Poland questions the relationship between knowledge in the form of public presence of memory and its reception. Kapralski draws on a number of public opinion surveys to demonstrate developments in the understanding of and attitude towards the Holocaust in Poland. Based on these results, Kapralski argues that the Holocaust has indeed been commemorated publicly and officially in Poland since the fall of communism, but it has not become part of the individual remembering within members of the Polish population. Though formally present in a general Polish memoryscape, the Holocaust has not been received and included into individual and emotionally engaged memory.

The chapter by Natalija Majsova looks at the relationship between memory and cinematic aesthetics. Majsova shows how cinematic representations of memory narratives constitute a reception and remediation of society's

established memory narratives. Investigating both the narrative representation and the formal aesthetics, Majsova demonstrates how post-Soviet films of the dawn of the space age challenge dominant memory narratives. Yet, by contrasting these readings with review examples of the films' reception by lay viewers, Majsova points out that reception is certainly diverse, as the contesting and challenging meanings are not necessarily readable or relevant to viewers.

The role of literary memory mediation and long-term reception of literary memory is studied in Daisy Neijmann and Gunthorun Gudmundsdottir's chapter on the reception and afterlife of the memoirs of an Icelandic fighter with the International Brigades in the Spanish civil war. Neijmann and Gunthorun Gudmundsdottir demonstrate how literary mediations of memory may remain in the shadow of public memory, only to return to public prominence through another literary remediation. Indeed, as Neijmann and Gudmundsdottir show, the literary reception and remediation may provide memory narratives that are otherwise absent from public memory and memorialization.

The internet as a site of transcultural memory, remediation and reception is the topic of Anne Heimo's chapter on online commemoration of the 1913 Italian hall tragedy, in which 73 people were killed at a Christmas celebration in Michigan. Heimo shows how narratives of the tragedy are being shared by individuals within online communities and openly accessible on the web. Heimo investigates how individuals as non-historians and non-professional memory entrepreneurs contribute to creating a spontaneous digital archive of such narratives, keeping the memory alive through regular remediation, and how other individuals engage and react to this.

The audience's reaction to memory mediation is the object of Vjeran Pavlaković and Benedikt Perak's chapter, which presents a methodologically innovative pilot study of how emotional reactions to memorials and political discourse may be measured. Pavlaković and Perak investigate how a group of informants react emotionally when confronted with the main monument to the victims of Croatia's Fascist Second World War regime, and how their affective reactions are influenced when primed by different types of political discourse. While the study clearly shows emotional reactions to the monument, it also demonstrates that the affective reactions are influenced by the degree to which the moral presumptions and standards of the informants are being challenged.

In the concluding essay, Wulf Kansteiner speculatively asks what has happened to the idea of cosmopolitan memory during what he calls 'the transnationalization of the Holocaust' and the export of 'the German model of memory management' as it was redistributed to and embraced by other

European countries. Questioning to which extent people around the globe are able to feel passionately involved in transnational memory and practices of belonging, Kansteiner looks at attempts in the 21st century to create engaging Holocaust memory through different media, such as video games and Facebook. Studying the types of responses, or lack thereof, that such projects have attracted, Kansteiner's essay discusses the representation, circulation and regimentation of Holocaust memory in the digital sphere.

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